nour, then that they thinke it the labor of him, who winneth quils for the web of Penelope.

The quarrel is not yet ended, which hath risen amongst the anciente Phylosophers, touching the originall of the worlde, which some will haue to concerne only the earth, & their contents: others the mighty frame of the vniuersall: euery one letting downe his seuerall reason, as being loath to haue seemed ignorante of those great matters: when to things in which they had more interest, being of one creation with the heauens, and the earth, they were mere strangers, for that light of which Zacharie and the Euangelistes spake, had not then shined to them, by which they mighte thorough the thicke clowdes of nature behold themselues, a knowledge discended from heauen. For whilst they trauayled (Curiositie being their guid) to find out in the numbers of Pythagorus, the moets of epicure, and seperated formes of Democrates, the naturall cause of the worlde, they reuealed by chance, the true procreation of nothing: as men in seeking Mines doe first finde water, without which there is no store of mettle congealed.

This labor although it were not, in dangers equall to those of Herculas, yet is it worthy of great praise, in bringing to light a discent further, then was eyther knowne to Vlpian, or the learned Heraulds of that time, since which, no man hath medled therin: they only endeuoring to fynd out the originall of Nilus, the causes of his inundations and ebs: the vehement motions of the Aire, and earth, the mouing of the planets, their Eclipses, and other accredents.

The prophane antiquitie therefore, vnlesse by casuall meanes, entreated little hereof, as of that which by their rule, ℘ Nihil ex Nihilo fit, conteined not matter of profit, or commendation: for which those Phylosophers hunted, as ambitious men for dominion and empire. Leauing therefore (as men impatient to abide without the vaine praises of the people) that difficult and laudable enterprise to the

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Diuers of singuler reputation, to recreate themselues from their grauer studies, haue after the nature of their conceytes written diuersly, & that of such matter, which in the opinion of the people, seemed not worthy the pen of a meane scholler: in which notwithstanding, they shewed no small argument of their greate iudgment, that erred at no time lesse, thē when it apeared most idle, and lowlye giuen. For as in the quiet times of states well gouerned, Souldiers trained with shewes of no danger, and exercised in pleasant marches, feruentlye coueting the hazarde of battle: so returned those rare men, from their lighter labors, more resolute, to beare the heauy burden of their ancient studies. By imitation of whome maye the meaner sorte, being also wearied with other accedents of the worlde, vndertake the like (as the poore help of cuntrey musicke for a plowemans dumpe) with no lesse warrantise, then the sheapheard may the vse of his Oten pipe, Princes hauing the Cornet, & other excellent Instruments. For to men that differ in no other circumstance, thē the fauorable aspect of Fortune, hath Nature, being as good mother to the Ideot, as the greatest clarke, vsed for one sort of sicknes, a like methode of cure, as a meane to mound hir children with the true knowledge of themselues, by which their societie, and mutuall good will is maintained. Thys equitie in nature hath moued mee, as a lenetiue of the mind (though beside my infirmities, I haue many things in common with others) to enterprise the praise of Nothing:

which I confesse might haue had more ornament, if it had fallen in the handes of the learned, by whose labors the weaknesse of the subiect might haue bene holpen. Yet for y betweene the depth of their skil, and the shallownes of this matter, there is small proportion: I thought the same more agreable for my selfe, whose iudgement hath nerest conformitie therewith.

Whilest I endeuored to shun Agrippas vanities, and Erasmus follyes, as one that might haue bene a paterne of either, I cloathed with bare garments this treatise: for equity would not that Drones fede with the Muses birds, neither that Arachne weaue in the frames of Minerua. My purpose hath not bene to publishe any thing contrary to pietie (which with many obseruances, I haue regarded) or in beguiling the time, in which I salue my owne sores, to wounde the wandering appetite of such as hunt nouelties, and ingorge themselues with euery poison, that hath either his outwarde sorces alaide wyth swete smelles, or sauorie tasts.

But I who had rather brede no delight, then betraie the sences, haue in consideration therof, put this Caueat, that those fictions which be without order scattered in this pamphlet, be for no other cause layde downe, then to pece with phantasticke artificers, the defects of their inuention: none being so hardy to drawe Venus without hir Vaile, or Mars vnarmed.

The weake helpe of these supposes, I submit to the learned censure of the godly, who knowe them to be no otherwise parte of any worke, then steyning coullers of one nature, with the table or linnen hanging.

I meane not to be iealous of the good report of this treatise, as Appelles was of his picture: but giue leaue for all sorts to reprehende me for nothing, for whose sake I haue made apparance of some enmitie to all thinges, neither to impunge any ground of equitie, but to take such measure as I haue poized to others: of whome I entreate no other fa-

nour,

nour, then that they thinke it the labor of him, who windeth quils for the web of Penelope.

The quarrel is not yet ended, which hath risen amongst the anciente Phylosophers, touching the originall of the worlde, which some will haue to concerne only the earth, & hir contents: others the mighty frame of the vniuersall: euery one setting downe his seuerall reason, as being loath to haue seemed ignorante of those great matters: when to things in which they had more interest, being of one creation with the heauens, and the earth, they were mere strangers, for that light of which Zacharie and the Euangelist spake, had not then shined to them, by which they might thorough the thicke clowdes of nature behold themselues, a knowledge discended from heauen. For whilst they trauayled (Curiositie being their guid) to find out in the numbers of Pythagorus, the moets of epicure, and seperated formes of Democrates, the naturall cause of the worlde, they reuealed by chance, the true procreation of nothing: as men in seeking Mines doe first finde water, without which there is no store of Pettle congealed.

This labor although it were not, in dangers equall to those of Herculus, yet is it worthy of great praise, in bringing to light a discent further, then was eyther knowne to Vlpian, or the learned Heraulds of that time, since which, no man hath medled therin: they only endeuoring to fynd out the originall of Nilus, the causes of his inundations and ebs: the vehement motions of the Aire, and earth, the moouing of the planets, their Eclipses, and other accedents.

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posteritie of the children of God, they gaue themselues to be authors of many partialities and sectes: But these latter sort, vpon whose backs this charge was cast, after they had beheld the state of all thinges, perceiued the cause of their production, to consist of a nature more excellent the they were of: which being without the compasse of their schole causes, must of necessytie be ascribed vnto the wonderfull omnipotencie of God, who by his diuine wisdome, composed the vniuersall substance of nothing: which is by so much of greater dignitie, by howe much it hath rather pleased the creator to fram therof the worthyest creatures. And though it liked Tully, to name the reuealing of these misteries to the multitude, great impieties: yet thinke I it necessary, as meane to attaine to the true knowledge of God, and our selues: of God, who making all thinges for man of nothing, is preched to vs by the architecture of this mightie engin of the world: of our selues, who being made of reasonable soules, & bodyes, pertake both of the natures of Angells, and brute beasts: to that ende, we embase not with abiecte mindes the excellency of the first, or raise the second higher, then is agreable to our strength. For that substance, which we communicate with Angels, being created of nothing, draweth vs by a secreter property, to the contemplation of heauenly things, then the Abament doth from the other, being a natiue of the earth, inclineth vs by a naturall impultion, to fire our care theron, til we fall groueling from al duetie, and (being subiect to diuerse alterations, and changes, either increasing, or decreasing with the mone) are fynally eclipsed with the grade. This is therfore a matter to be regarded of them, which be rockt in the pleasures of this worlde, that the bodye being one discent more from nothing then the soule, is by many degrees further from all vertue the the same: & that so long, as we reteined ỹ simple of our begining, we were (as hauing our minds regulated by the good order of nature) the louers of vertue. But after that the com-

poundes of the serpent, and our first parents, had roted in vs these possessiues, Meum et tuum, (the elements of ambition) we declined from that age, which in respect of this, & the innocency of that time, was named golden: talking in lieue of the pleasant fruits of ỹ Orchard of Eden, the sower leauen of the first error; which so corrupted the whole state of the worlde, that as by no ages, it stode further remoued from the time of his creation: take it also, being newly seperated from pietie, new names, with which, his honorable title was extinguished, as hauing no other effects then of iron, and therfore now named therof.

In this proportion, is there to be obserued, the nature of both the mettles, if iron be to be named one, which maketh for this matter in hand. For as gold (being made of nothing, reteineth still his naturall propertie, and substance) neither yelding to the moistnes of the water, or consuming by the extreame furie of the fire, is the type of those, who despysing all things, are afflicted for vertue: so iron being artificially made of stones, and shewing by his rust, the vneuen temperature of the elements, & malitious influence of the planets in his composition, prefigureth the vngodly estate of man, wasted by the flame of concupisence, & canker of lose lyfe.

The meane to attaine perfection, is eyther to returne to that of which al things were created, or to be stil endowed with the simple of the first creation: which neither ỹ lower heauens, that ouer spreade the worlde with their beautiful lights, or the earth which is conteined in the midst of them, are: it being pronounst by the Psalmist, that they shal ware old as doth a garment: which proueth their vertue by succession of times, to diminishe, and not to be of such efficacie in working, as when they were created of nothing: since which time, the one hath for our sinnes put on the nature of Brasse, and the other of Iron: as qualities hauing affinitie with our corruption, which were to be restored by those

things,

things, in which it hath offended, but that the abundaunte mercie of God disparieth for the nurrishment of his creatures, with this rule of iustice.

The heauenly politicke in reforming the disorders of his common weale, referreth vs to the beginning, in which was neither corruption of law, or nature: the like haue his disciples done, as to that where lieth no suspition of il meaning. But such as be croked followers of this company, zealous of the godly antiquitie, make all beginninges doubtfull, which are of more age then themselues: and as men vtterly ignorante of the græuous soers of their natural cuntrie, name nothing the cause. Our soueraign gouernes, applieth the easiest remedies of godly surgerie, for preseruation of the whole bodye: but in this, they be no otherwise deceiued, then in those actions which be squared with the rule of error. For as these Mal Contents, of the vatican Serraglio, vse (contrary to the sincere purity of the sacred word, and imitation of the holy Fathers) prophane and superstricious worshipping of God, in stead of adoring him in truth, and veritie: in like manner, haue many enormities bene perpetrated for nothing, with no lesse furie, then as though all the powers of nature, had consented to beate reason from the sterne, and to sincke the vessell of sound iudgement: to which notwithstanding, we ought not to attribute the cause of ill effects: The goodnes of wine being not impaired, though some take the Mone for a candle, or the Sunne vnprofitable, for that others are scorched with the heate: which hurt not in respect of their qualities, but by meane of the pacients indisposition: so nothing, entering the emptie mindes of diuers personages, with that motiue, which some schole men doubt to make either an accedent, or a substance, and therfore by rõiecture nothing also: stirreth them (as the aire of the fire, moueth either lighte or dry things) by some power of the first nature: from which because they as now excluded: they followe their seuerall

affections,

affections, whether it be in graue or lighte matter, as Wolues quarrelling with lambs, for troubling the streme beneath them, or men seeking cudgels to beate dogges for waging their tailes. For proofe, let vs descend to a perticuler example of the waywarde qualities of olde age: which though it be reuerenced with many ceremonies, and entertayned with no commodities of the world: yet remaineth it impacient of either fortune, consuming for nothing in great frowardnes, the residue of their brittle yeares: or as fondly turning ouer the leaues of their last times, as hauing put of the sobrietie of ancient men, or the shamfastnes of young childre: bestow the remnant of their life in making Sonets, in smothing their wrinckled skin, coulloring their white haires, perfuming ẏ venimus erhalations of their stomaks, & carrolling w ratling voyce their amorous Villanella: although without hazarding the losse of some toth, they open not their hanging chappes, more fearfull then the graue.

Many other thinges vnseemely that time, are intemperatly passed by them, as though a doting libertie, gotten by some colloure of long experience, and imitation of lighte men, might more warrant their safetie, then a wilde Ape, deceiued by the hunters: with whome whilest they woulde seeme to be that which they are not, they pittifullye forgo ẏ which they be: making that in which there is no vice, the shade of their ill doing, and with little children (being demaunded the cause of their action) answer it is for nothing.

To which notwithstanding, there is no enimie so capitall, as these dotards, and light estate of louers: who neuer liked Homer, or his muses, accompanied with nothing: according to the ground of their poet: with Muses though thou comst accompanied Homer, if thou bring nothing, ibis Homere foras: yet haue many of them therefore vowed themselues to the suspected holynes of Paulina, who more fauored Mundus, in the person of Anubus for nothing, then in the habit of a Romaine knight, with his xx. Miriadas.

It mattereth not that Cleopatra was more chargeable to hir Corporalls: so that the rest of that sect, who by their sober conuersations, & mildnes of nature, are to alay the bitter accedents of mans lyfe, were excluded these actions: for that their lowsenes, is the loking glasse of mans sinne, and (according to this rule, that who striketh with the sword, shal be stroke with the scabarde) a pronounced reward of their husbands error.

Miserable is that course, and contrary to the nature of honestie, to ascribe to nothing their disloyal parts: but so doe they, that vnder their owne tesse, they may be conuinced of many faultes, and their condemnation be greater.

Some others there be, by a marueilous indisposition of honestie, (who although they be garded with mo felicities, then diuers ages before them haue tasted) & courted w̄ many fauours of hir Maiesty, floate notwithstanding ouer the landmarke of due obedience, for no other cause, if they were well examined, then for nothing: a matter not agreing with their impietie, which yearely renueth w̄ Aphrica, some monster, nursed in their mutinus conferences, where being impatient of any season, they woulde drawe the gouernments of Princes, to the ordinary rule of themselues, capitulating their fauorers, with special noats of good wil: and cancelling the good names of the rest, with infamous titles: as though that men, and not God, had the erecting of kingdoms: whichwhilest they frame in the aire, with the rebellious Ciclops, they vndermine their naturall dwellings, and countrye walles: thinking to be made no smale fooles, in that they be, by those meanes knowne to Italie, France, and Spaine: when kings, whose sceptres be supported with prudence, and iustice, neuer reckned the executioners of their furye, within the Colledge of good men, or thought the reward of such maistiues, any other then garbage.

A portion to good for that course, which is made misera-

ble,

ble, in being ſuſpected to them, from whom they loke for al fauor and good wil: a matter to be reſerued by great eſtates, for honeſt men, leaſt their own people (by an ill preſident) be drawne from the dutie of good ſubiects, and recompence their Princes error with diſobedience: the ſame happning by the iuſt iudgements of god, which hetherto neuer failed, to miniſter them, who haue made themſelues ſtumbling blocks to their neighbours, new matter with which they haue bene fearefully intangled, to the terrible example of the whole worloe.

Let them therfore deale vprightly with al men, that iudge the earth, and not abuſe the amitie of vertuous Princes, for ouerthrowing a good cauſe: or alienat themſelues, or peaceable ordinaunces from their willing ſubiects, to the hazard of their whole intereſts: as though their deſires were to ſee the order in nature troubled, and to be the laſt whoſe eyes ſhould behold the ruin of all things.

It were a romth for ſome idle bodye, to loke into the accedents of euery ſtate, which hath bẽ diuerſly afflicted for nothing: or to peepe into euery dwelling, for examining this cauſe, which fathereth many nouelties, and ſuch enterpriſes, as are either blindly executed, or performed againſt the vſe of common ſence: as though thoſe things were lawfull to wiſe and valiant men, which are not permitted ideots, or thought naturall for brute beaſts.

In this loweſt degree of reaſon, Xerxes the greateſt prince, and leaſt wiſe of his time, by an vnſpeakeable folly, acquited all other of extreame blockiſhnes: for whatſoeuer any dedicated to that Lady or dame he ſeruilly loued, applied this forgetfull king to a plane tree, putting theron his Diadem, yelding humbly therto his ſcepter, & complaining with ſuch ieſtures, as be eyther diſſembled by wiſe louers, or plainely vſed by ſimple fooles: accurſing that day, and night, in which neither Sun or Mone, ſpread on him the ſhadowe of his beloued boughes, which had in ſuch ſort be-

reaued

reaued him of iudgement, by gathering in the swéete ayre, by their softe mouing, that his care of the Persian gouermente lay vnder foote, more estéeming the compasse of earth, which inclosed the roote of their trunck, thē his seuerall gouerments, and large dominions: which in his conceipte were no otherwise beautified, then by giuing nurrishment to the same.

Of like passions, may large volumes be written, though worthy of no other pen, then a black coale: or memorie then was by decrée of all Asia, left for the burner of Dianas temple. And although nothing is absolutly simple, innocent, & harmlesse in it self, yet therfore hath all impiety béen set abroch, duties abrogated, vertue suppressed, truth put to silence, & charitie purst, which should be currant amongest men: by which peruersiō, nothing hath found no lesse fauor, then the ritch stone by luster of his foile, or as the faire mistresse, by the company of browning hir mayde.

It shall be necessary in respecte thereof, to obserue a lyke proportion, in disciphering ẏ incomodities of those things we estéeme profitable, to that ende, we may more apparantly perceiue the good effects which come of nothing, as of the least, or no enimie of life, by whose societie many euils depart, which as murderers of peace, either drawe vs from the fauour of God, or bring vs into the vncertaine liking of the worlde: in which there was neuer any, but that he was continually toste and made seasicke, or suffered extreame wracke of lyfe, or other fortunes. And although the opinion which we conceiue of this trashe, hath a like dominion in vs, as white or blacke in other coullors: we neuerthelesse gaze theron, wͤ no other admiration & danger, then Narcissus beheld his beautifull reflexion, or chearishe it then as the frozen serpent, in the warme bosome of the ideot: by meane wherof, we render many times a sorrowfull testimonie of our light choise, and dangerous affections. The knot of this mistery hath closed the best wits,

for

for giuing iudgement, in this repugnancie in nature, vz: ỳ whilst euery one desireth a long and peaceable time, he yet hunteth after the vse of those things, which frowardly abridge ỳ good course of life. It is therfore no maruel, though this supernaturall motiue, hath bene condemned of them, who estéming al things by their weight & fashion, haue for their purpose, this croked saying. Somewhat hath some sauor, not weighing considerately, ỳ as by those instrumẽts by which we perceiue any pleasure common to man, we partake also a thousand incomodities, which flocke without number to crosse the ioyes of life: which so withereth wyth any sorrow, as though we had dwelt in continuall calamitie, and neuer felte other then the passions of extreame misery. Compaire the ioyes and sorrowes, which grow of corruptable things, & there will be sufficient reason minstred, to confirme this argument. For beginning with the state of mariage, from whence the maides of Greece reckned their age: who are they, that after the death of their beautifull, & chaste wiues: or contrary wise of their ritch and louing husbands, that thinke not their time past vanished, the present perished, and their life following desolate: reckning the remembrance of their olde ioyes, the mother of their newe sorrowes, and lamentable state. Of what naturall parent, being depriued of good children, doth not more lament their losse, then he reioyced of their liues: which being carefully feared, were by so much the lesse pleasant to him, who now sorroweth them with manye teares, as hauing lost the Image of his youth, the lantren of his sight, & staffe of his olde age. Touching the powers of man (whose corrupt nature, windeth as a hop wier, as well about ỳ rootes, as hearbs) they stand vs in so smale stead, that when we haue most nede of them, we are to seke their help. For whyleft one of them empeacheth the others function, the outwards sences wanting by that meane a moderator, take one thing for an other: obseruing no order in quantitie or qualitie, but

filling all things with iarrs, verifie the saying of the Pro-
phet: by hearing you shall heare, and not vnderstand; and
seeing you shall see, and not perceiue. If these two sences
which haue a preheminence aboue the rest (as well for the
necessary vse of life, as that by their means, we taste of the
louing goodnes of God) be by the deuine Oracle vnprofita-
ble for vs: what is to be said of the other partes of our body
which make vs by diuers insolences iniurius to God, and
man? but that we haue in each of them many deformities,
as though the loosenes of our life, were appointed the foile
of vertue, or that honesty could not be expressed without
hir contrary. The charitable loking vpon the torne leaues
and poore afflicted members of Christ, greatly profiteth no
doubt the dulnes of our bodily sight: which being seene and
not relieued, argueth vs of incrudelitie towards the head,
whose parts they are. Furthermore to behold in our sensu-
ality, and not in the singlenes of the eye, the beautiful pro-
portion of the world, the wonderfull, and vnchangeable
course of the heauenly bodyes, the marueilous motions of
those huge heaps of waters in the Sea, and dayly renuing
of his other creatures, which preach to vs the infinit wis-
dome and power of God, in the composition of this mighty
frame, be likewise testimonies of our darknes, and grosse
ignorance.

For better explayning this matter, in which with full
consent the world hath willingly erred: let vs, although
there is not any thing so agreable to nature, as the society
of euery liuing thing in his kind, yet view the consequent
effects of that felowship, and we shal for the most part find
it so hurtfull to our selues, that in respect of our mutual en-
mity, we are (by our owne censures) iudged Wolues one
to another. For whether it be for the desire of dominion, or
to haue comendation for wit, strength, or comlines before
others, seldome is there peace: and when it happeth, it ra-
ther gaineth vs opportunity to breake into greater violen-

 les,

ces, then to set the good slips of vertue: which if we plant, they prosper as growing out of their naturall soyle. It is not therfore to be marueiled, if we regarde all circumstances, thoughe the other creatures of God be enimies to vs: when our powers and natural parts dissent amongst themselues, & one man with great hatred prosecuteth an other. For after the chain of our obedience (by which we were tyed to the fauour of God) was broken, all his other creatures grew weary of our Empier, & as our professt enimies opposed themselues, in the quarell of their creator against vs: either vtterly refusing our company, as that which is supposed dãgerous, or so rebelliously obeying, as they sæm our Maisters, vnto whom we ow our seruice, for prouiding their fode, and other necessaries: for which they (being desirous to shake off the yoak of their bondage) yælde no other recompence, then the stripe of horne, hæle, or toth: vnlesse by our tirranie, they be made the vnwilling seruitors of our appetits. For some resolucion of this matter, let vs beholde the naturall contradiction of the simple shæpe, who by a secret instinct, rather chooseth to go naked, by clothing the byers with hir woll, and to venture hir sielie body in company of hir rauening enimies, then hir natural owner should be possessed of either. Furthermore, there is not any liuing thing, being not ioyned to our fellowship by some necessitie, whether it be the smale vncleane Flie, or the hurtful and laborsome Emot, that willingly draweth to ỹ same, but to anoye vs; or those things of which we make our profit, conspiring with great mallice against our liues and comodities, for which they lye in waite, as for a praye due to them, for our transgressing the sacred ordinances of God: by whose decrée, not only they, but the elements also haue broken that amitie they had at the beginning wyth man: anoying our bodies inwardly by their vneuen proportion, and no way fayling to oppresse our weake estate, by their outward effects.

For

For setting aside how the water ouerfloweth our cattle, perisheth our fruits, & drowneth our bodies, may we behold a malice greater then belongeth to lawfull enimies, in casting them vp to be deuoured of Foules and beasts, who are made honorable sepulchers to our miserable carcases: & not yet satisfied with this triumphe of vs (whom she findeth beyond al hope, receiued of these common aduersaries) proceedeth with no lesse fury (by meanes of the other elemẽts) against the remnant of them which perished by hir former crueltie, in yeelding fulsome vapors, which being drawne by some qualitie of the fire, are willingly receiued of the aire, to be suckt of them, who therby are made parents of mortal diseases, and long infirmities. Neither haue we any peace with the earth, a dayly and sullen enemie to man, which eyther by hir quaking, in bearing the heauie burden of our vncleannes, murdereth many: or being mindful how hir beauty faded in the deluge, for our iniquity, so opposeth hir selfe against our labors, that in gathering one ounce of things necessary, we bring in therwith two pound of sorrow, powdring our meate with sighes, mingling our drink with teares, and slumbering in deepe care, as hauing many calamities more attendant then our shadowes, which forsake not our payned bodies, til they haue deliuered them for a full satisfaction, to this greedy creditor the earth.

The ordinary of Tantulus were rather to be wished, then those things or their effects, which by a populer opinion, are named profitable: and therof durst I make some natiue of Platoes den, the Palemon: to whome, although Epicure had shewed the beautifull buildings of Corinth, the sweete perfumes of Thebes, the plentiful tables of Capua, or magnificence of the Romaine Empire, would iudge them farre vnmete for the safe conuersation of man: who with this fraught, may as easily ariue in the heauenly port, as a Camell may passe the eie of a Needle. It is worthy of some obseruation to behold the enmitie which the other creatures

beſides man, as well ſenſible as inſenſible, haue betweene their ſeuerall kinds, as the Serpents & Fire, being things ſencible and inſencible, Oyle and Cowcumbers, feathers of Doues and Eagles, being both inſencible, the ſmale bird Ægitus and the Aſſe, being both ſencible, &c. eſpecially for that there is no hope left to gather profit by the vſe of theſe things, which are ſo incommodious to themſelues. It ſæmeth Byas, or as it pleaſeth ſome Stilpo, diſagrēd not from this argumēt, who in flying naked the fown of his byrth, which conteined both his friends & ſubſtance, ỹ were at one inſtāt in hazard of burning: anſwered them, who willed him more carefully to regard his loſſe. All thoſe things which be mine, I take with me: inferring therby, that vertue is the only ornament and poſſeſſion of a wiſe man: all other things being but ſnarles to intangle honeſtie, and to caſt vs headlong into much miſerie.

Of that opinion were many other, who beholding our ſtates buffeted by proſperous or aduerſe Fortune, vtterly condemned the life of man, as ỹ which by the vſe of worldly things was made the ſtorehouſe of many euils.

The conſideration hereof, miniſtred Heraclitus large flowdes of teares, and clowdes of ſighes, as vnfained witneſſes of his continuall mourning, for thoſe miſeries wyth which he beheld our liues filled and made lamentable. The ſelfe ſame cauſed Democritus to laugh at them, and their madnes, that thought all other times then thoſe, in which they purſued the cauſes of their ſhort life, or infinite trouble, loſt. They both agreeing, that our liues be ſo deluded wyth the world, as the vnwarye bird, by the Fowlers call, or the greedy Trowt, by the ſundry coulors of the fethered hoke.

In all theſe matters may we behold the true portraits of ſorrow, layde forth wyth the deceiuable coulors of Anagirus, were we not ſuch, which by cuſtome, lyke as well the reflexions of light, as the natural brightnes of the Sun: or

as children ill learned to forgoe with Esau for Porrage, a land that floweth with heauenly fode.

And although we deserue no better (if we respect our own worthynes) then a surplus of those euils: yet for that they may be seperated by an other trade of life, I condemn them as meanes, to drawe vs from pietie, or by which we are inferior to brute beasts, who are farre from those affections, with which we be burdened and throwne downe.

I may appeale in these matters, from common opinion, to the Citezens of the worlde, whose experience knoweth we be no otherwise made of, then of Sirenes, or pittied, then of Crocodils: but each way assailed with flatteries, and supposed compassions, as a people ill guided to discern of our aduersaries. This duely considered that all things be either naturally our enimies, or by our error in vsing them, made vnprofitable: let vs as men made wise by our owne perril, make much of their contrarie, by whose behiffe we fynde some inclination to honesty, or by whose meane, we lose not our liues, credite, and peaceable state: but may haue in respect of our securitie therby, one countenance with Iuuenals passenger: when others hauing their harts heauier then their purses, curse with the wearie Spainard, the titles of Crosses, they being turning markes of high wayes, farre from the dwelling of men: honoring on the other side the whéele, and gibbet, as signes of rest, being placed neare to Townes, and Cities.

The affinitie which hath béene euer betwéene nothing, and the pouerty of men, maketh the one hardly to be discerned from the other in the possession of their owners: the effectes of both, being the cause of good arts, and inuention of some newe matter profitable to the world. For the mind being at no time idle, or as some will haue it, neyther alwayes wel occupied, & not impeached with forrein causes, traueileth to bring forth somwhat of excellent quality, and therefore haue I marueiled at the idlenes of those times

which

which had leasure to establishe this saying. Pouertie is an enimie to good manners, a prouerbe amongst vs: the same being necessary for the knowledge of our selues, that are by the contrary most insolent and intollerable. Dionisius whilst he had the pompe of a King, was estæmed of all men tirranius, & being erpelled his realme, named for his temperance, and wisedome, a Phylosopher. Alexander of Macedonia, being (for his dominions) wounded wyth the holy flatteries of Iupiter Hamons Preists, of a sober Prince became violent: as he terriblye erpressed in the miserable fortune of his faythfull counceller Clitus, and the lamentable state of Persepolis: by which & such like he brought himselfe in hatred of his people, by whose seruice he passed many hazards of battle, which then were had in admiration, & nowe scarce beleeued of those, that haue not traueiled in the diuine Oracles of Daniell, and other writghters (touching that matter) of good report. For such were the disagræments of affections in this Prince, that whilst he estæmed the contents of the worlde, he excæded all the great men of his time in losenes of lyfe, and extreame crueltie: and contrarie wise, when he feared nothing, and reuerenced the louers therof, as he confirmed by visiting Diogenes in hys Tun: there was none gained so easily the harts of all men as he: being by their whole consents iudged worthy, for his magnimitie and temperance, vnto whom the world ought only to yæld his obedience. Notwithstanding this opinion receiued by all men of him, repaired he (as I saide) to the straight lodging of Diogenes, as vnto him with whom he had neare equalitie in nothing.

The which this good Phylosopher had in such estimation, y he offered therfore dayly supplications, to those Images which were erected in the publicke places of Athens, for y memorie of their good Citizens: although some hold, he obserued this custome to that ende he might more pacientlye beare the deniall of such necessaries, as he sought at the

handes

handes of ritch men.

But how vnprobable their opinion is, the conference betweene him being in his Tun, and Alexander standing betweene the sun and the mouth therof proueth. For after Alexander found that confirmed by his owne experience, which he heard reported by others, touching the excellency of Diogenes wit, and the rare quicknes of his spirite: and seeing him with a minde greater then belongeth to a man in aduersitie, to contemne both life, and other matters of the world, he studied according to ỹ worthines of himselfe, to nurrishe those vertues by somewhat, that might be agreable to the magnificence of a King: and therfore encouraged Diogenes (whom he found not stored with any thing in his Tun, which serued for all weathers) to aske possession, or other necessaries. But Diogenes who resolutely addicted himselfe to that dwelling, which he preferred before the Areopage, and Courts of Kings: and vnto whom the least matter in the fauour of nothing seemed greeuous: required Alexander in lieu of his offer, to remoue his shadow, that had entred the mouth of his Tub, as that wherewith his lodging was ouer charged, ỹ same being only reserued for him and nothing.

Esope who painted to vs by Wyrdes, Fishes, Serpents, & foure footed beasts, the forme of an honest and safe lyfe, being taken with the enimie, and made subiect (with soles) to misery, was w̄ other bondmē offered to be sold to Xantus the Philosopher, and being demaunded by Xantus what he could do, to that end he might therafter rate his price, changed not with his fortune his opinion: but answered, as if he were rather to be estéemed of the byer, he coulde do nothing.

Xantus who became maister to this Esope, and knew the treasurers of nothing, to be the paimaisters of Philosophie: to make triall with what iudgement, his newe seruaunt affirmed himselfe able for nothing, and desirous as well to

sée a louer, as a doer therof: had brought to his house by hys comandement, and the conduction of Esope, one that loued nothing: whom Xantus enterteined with great fare, and for a Phylosophicall conclusion, and want of other melodie, to furnishe that feast, counterfeited the inuention of Pithagoras musicke on his wiues backe: who singing a sorrowfull plaine song therto, ministred such cause of mirth to his guesse, that he fel from the borde with extreame laughter: by which Xantus knew the great iudgement of his man, in finding the owner of this Jewell, whom he caused to be solemnly cõueied out of his house vpon four mens shoulders, as that which was not worthy to lodge so honorable a person: an act answerable to the high renown of this learned Phylosopher.

Socrates who by the Oracle of Apollo, was named the profoundest man of that time: out of whose springs Plato dranke the swéte licor of his Phylosophie: who though he might w warrantise, in respect of that praise, haue challenged the first place for his vniuersall knowledge: yet he esteeming the same as a matter contemptible, made his choise to knowe nothing only: as by which he found the way to vertue more safe, and with lesse danger. This purpose he chaunged not at that time he went to dye for inueighing against the Athenians adoration of Idols. For euen then, when Xantippa his wife, the same Xantippa (who not long before as a good Scholemistresse to learne him thé sufferance of aduersitie, had powred a vessell of colde water on his head) saw hir temperat companion (who had long bene the packehorse of hir household actions) taken from hir by his Idolatrus Citizens, pittifully lamented (as being perhaps pleasd, to be otherwise honestly rid of his Philosophicall rules) that he should suffer for nothing. But Socrates, who at no time was vnlike himselfe, gladly confessed to dy willingly for nothing, for whose sake he had named himselfe ignorannt of all things: and therfore blamed hir, that

rashly misliked the cause, by which he was made innocent of any crime, that might slaunder his life to the world.

Caius Cæsar, being of that magnanimitie, that the world difficultly conteyned his greatnes, to sound the disposition of the Senat, preferred diuers sutes to them for himselfe, & fauorers: but they as men tealius of the Romaine state, and muffeled with the ouer sight of their fatall destinie, graunted (not knowing what) nothing: a matter taken of Cæsar in better part, then if they had made him perpetuall Dictator: as by which being no way their debter, he toke occasion to enter vpon them, and their liberties, and consequently to cease the large domains of their Empire into his hands: whereas if they had in the beginning alaide the heate of his ambition, with the ordinarie hope of other sutors, he had giuen place to some other, who had chastised their gormandise, that brought them in hatred of all men.

The opinion which these great Princes, and excellente Phylosophers conceiued of nothing, might confirme others of meaner iudgement to be on their side: if either ỳ good euents which haue risen thereof, or the authoritie of the wit, or valure of those rare men, were of force with the people: who w̄ smale labor are made attentiue to behold Juglers, and to credite their craft, as a matter of no more deceite, then the teares of light women.

But in as much as these prophane presidents, are not of sufficient weight, to draw those who dissembling the loue of nothing, snatch with Esops Dogge at the shadow of their bone: let vs behold what methode of teaching ỳ contempt of transitorie things (and the loue of their contrary) was vsed of our heauenly Doctor, who what rule soeuer he laid downe to be followed of his people, he first practised (as a good lawmaker) in himselfe: refusing (naturall order being peruerted) the managing of temporall things, as ill furniture for the policie of ỳ kingdome. He framed his Saints: who being more beloued of God then the Lillie or young

Rauen:

Rauen: (the one beautified and the other nurrished, without any helpe of the world, or nature) are to erspect greater succour in their infirmities, & stronger aide. How vnprofitable mouldes the world and nature are to cast the forme of a godly perfection, he hath drawne with quicke coulors in the person of the ritch man, who is not by ỳ sacred rule made perfite, vnlesse he sell all that he hath, and giueth the same to them that haue nothing.

Great is the excellencie therof, whose owners be the obiects of charity, which (to cloath hir naked children) seeketh not those things which be hir owne: and no lesse expedient for our righteousnes, which is made perfit by possessing the same: an act to be regarded for our payment, which neyther the robber taketh, or is made corruptible by the rust, or moth. When contrariwise to entertaine them that tast the fat of the earth, is without hope of rewarde: vnlesse the casters of water into the Sea, are to be praised for their charitie. Amongst other passages which may be cited for this purpose, leauing the ordinances of Moyses, which reiected such as were solicited with worldly busines, as persons vtterly vnprofitable for warlike discipline: the same being a tipe of the life of man, named no other then a Pilgrimage, or warfare vpon earth. Christs louing imbracements of the little children (who cared for nothing) are not of least importance: for their simplicitie being the shadow of our first innocency, is to be reentred, as the posterne of true godlynes: which lieth not open to them that haue the world in admiration, and be not resolute followers of the childrens ignorance.

As the good scholler of this most excellent Maister the Apostle, desired not to know any thing in Corinth, but Christ crucified: as if he would haue said, setting that most highe misterie aside, by which only without any adiunct, or seperated cause, the heauens lye open to vs, the rest are to be refused, as impeaching true godlines. What is there to be

gathered

gathered hereof: but ỳ nothing furthereth our deuotions, and therfore to be made of, before matters of the worlde, as the same Apostle, not as I make him speake, but as he further proueth, by adding that the worldely or fleshly man, perceiueth not those things which be of God: then which ignorance, there is not any thing annexed vnto the miserable and wretched estate of man of worse qualitie, the same being the verie sinister, which deuideth our parts from the inheritance of Gods children: who are not reputed his, vnlesse they shake off the loue of the world, & themselues, and boast of nothing, as without which, they partake many things with vnreasonable creatures, whose natures by vse they put on, and are made lyke them in all things, their shapes excepted. For in that sence also spake the Apostle, when he layde before the Corinthians some course of lyfe, which he would they vsed, as though it were not: which argument, the beloued Disciple followed, with no lesse emphasis, then the chosen vessell of God: forbiding the loue of the world, the same being pregnant in it selfe, to sequester from our vse all societie of the heauenly traine: which is to one purpose, as if he had extolled nothing: whose praises he might haue more expressly set downe, but that he endeuored to bring the same in fauor, by dispraise of the contrary: as Licurgas comended to his Cittizens sobrietie, by shewing them the vncleane behauiour of his drunken bondmen.

This kinde of teaching hath beene vsed of diuers, when without violence they entended to remoue an euill deepely rooted in our affections: which are not in weeding their vnnaturall superfluities, to be pressed with the seuere discipline of ruffe censures: least they being made weake by that meane, let slip the good seedes of vertue, with the cornels of our corruption, as bodyes losing their retentiue faculties, by vehemencie of the purge.

But to returne where I left, touching the contempt and abiect

abiect vse of worldly things. Petrarck in his tryumphe of death, newly speaking in our tongue, by an vnlearned trãslator, mainteyneth the same argument.

THe Popes (saith he) the Kings, & who cõmanded haue the (worlde,
Are naked now, misers, and needy persons all,
Now treasures where: now honors where: and precious stones?
And Scepters where? & Crownes, Myters, & purple shewes:
He wretched is that layes his hope in mortall things:
But who doth not? and if he finde himselfe at length
Deceiued, tis reason great, and answeareth well his act:
O senceles men, so much to traueile what auailes?
To the auncient Mother great all shall returne at last,
And hardly shall the mention of your names be found,
Of a thousand labors not one a profite yeeldes,
But each of them apparant vanities are knowne.
Your studies who doth vnderstand can tell me this.
With mindes inflamde, alwayes to domage of your selues,
What profite ist? so many countryes to subdue,
And nations diuers tributaries make vnknown,
And after enterprices perillous and vaine,
With blood to conquer walled Townes, and treasure get?
A way more sweete is found with water, and with bread.
With glasse & wood, then with ritch orient stone & gold.

By these hurtfull effects & dangerous impressions of all things, I finde great cause why nothing should be more regarded: as wel for that it serueth al humors, though by sundry meanes, as that also the same is enimie, or hauing sotietie with things hurtfull to man: but a god helpe, to make him in true godlines like vnto auncient Job (somtyme commended of God) who more then y rest of men, stood beholding therto, as vnto his vnseperable friend, which only accompanied him into the worlde, remayned with him in his miserable pouerty, and sickines, and lastly returned with him, to his

Sepulcher, the gate of his rest and felicitie, in which although no man hath in this world a perfection, yet dayweth he nerest thereto, either in the prime of life, or decreped age therof. The first as was said of yong children not caring for the world, and therfore happy: the other being vnfit for the world, and therfore like to be happy. For in the latter time of man, when all things remaine vnpleasant to him, not for that he hateth them, but in respect of his want of power (which then waxeth weake) to vse them, he maketh of his necessity a vertue, and in lieu of his wonted violences, and ouer running the world, either restraineth himself to some monasticall life, or teacheth at home the vse of true fortitude and militarie prudence: or if weakened by the dangerous assaults of loue, he highly praiseth chastitie, reading to his wife the legend of good women, wherby she may more patiently haue fellowship with him in his inuoluntarie abstinence: or if in his yong time he alwayes laboured in the fields of Neptunus, he waxeth being olde a maker of Carts for Nauigation, meaning to recompence the furious cruelstie of his youth, with the charitable compassion of his olde age: it is for the sequal a matter of no smale consideration; to beholde these particions, and first the infancy, which hauing little or no communitie with worldly felicities, resteth pacified with the abiect things of nature, the other being of many parts (by some participation it hath w two faced Ianus) a neuter to all things.

The contempt, or foolerie of the world, that happeth by this necessitie, is no way worthy of praise in vs, though (as Vbi desinit Philosophus incipit medicus) it be an eternall meane, where by we supernaturallye apprehende the heauenly graces, that haue no fellowshyp with those things, for which we enuie, mislike, or imbrace one another: or for which we teare the bowels of the earth, or trust our selues to the vnconstant waues, or ruffe seas.

From these dangers of life, if any (by the benine prouidence)

hence) escape, they are beyonde all expectation (when no other thing is leste them then a weary confusion) mightily succored by that diuine power, which til then, lyeth alwse, as a strong relefe for our weake estate.

To this are the testimonies of the scriptures answerable: which witnes the bountious liberality of God, to the nedy, naked, miserable, and possessors of nothing; and his indignation to the mighty, and rich, whom he pulleth from their seates, and sendeth emptie from his presence.

Furthermore, where as the schoolemen haue this ground, that Natura abhorret vacuum, which is the natural element, or residence of nothing, it consequently followeth, that she also abhorreth nothing, which maketh nothing, by so much of greater dignity, by how much our nature being peruerse is prone to sinns, the only cause of Gods fearefull iudgements, and heauie displeasures.

These are the effects of natures (an enimie to the Course of nothing) to kindle on our backs, hir bundle of rotten sticks, with the consuming fire of Gods wrath. I cease not in respect hereof to muse at them before mētioned, that complaine for nothing, (as Procris being ielous of Aura) the same remaining a harmles companion of our life, by whose fellowship, we may say with Cicero, that we be neuer lesse alone, then when we be alone: and by our experience affirme, that we are not any way so safe, as when nothing is neere vs: which hauing all the parts of truth, on which we may confidently repose our selues, is to be preferred before any thing in nature: whether it be man (who for his seuerall perfections is named the little worlde) with whome diuers vnreasonable creatures, to whets his swelling humours, are equally matched in many things he claimeth prerogatiue: or any other liuing creature, which for some perticuler qualitie, is noted to be excellent about the rest. For if we looke into the reasonable substance of man, & apt composition of his body, nothing is more absolute in euery

part then he: if into the courage of the Lyon, or force and docilitie of the Elephant, nothing doth apeare of more fortitude, strength, and aptnes then either: and againe if we regard fidelitie, meeknes, and prudence of the Dog, Dowe, and Serpent: nothing goeth beyond them in their seuerall properties, being both inlarged & restrained beyond any substance that is definit: of whose fame, there is no sort may more boast, then the reuerent estate of the maryed: for that nothing maketh their attonments, renueth their leagues, & setteth order in their houshold busines, ministring in all seasons such argumente of peace: that thy stately Capitall (proud Rome) had not beheld ỹ bloody fal of pacified Cæsar, if nothing had accompanied him: neither had Ierusalem beene infortunat in the losse of hir beautifull Temple, and mighty walles, if nothing in place of hir seditious Captains had taken hir defence, against the terible siege of that good Emperour Titus. And yet had thy France, O honorable Shatilion, beheld thy white haires and valiant hands, if nothing had counselled thy King to ẽmend the execution of his displeasurs to the fearfull night: in which Nocte sub obscura, heu flebile Martis opus. Neither had thy prouinces pore Belgia, being the sweete harborough of many nations, suffered so many violences by the incursions of the Italian, and Spanishe Armies, had their leaders louen nothing, as they did the sweetnes of the soyle, their rich Cities, and beautifull buildings: seyng by their forces with thy peoples bloode, and filled with impietie, ministring to thee, in steade of thy countrey lawes, a Souldiers libertie, and vnto thy neighbours new motions, wherby they might more opportunely, attend the execution of their policie: which kindleth the fire of thy bayne, in the bowels of thy people: who being distracted by their diuers zeales, take armes to expell themselues, and to fill al parts with the newes of their fall. For it accordeth with equitie, that in what we offend, we be chastised.

Thy

Thy medicine for this grefe is the vnitie of thy people, which if (by thy fatall destinie) it be impeached, learne to submit thy stiffe neck and mightie shoulders, to that yoak vnder which prowd nations haue drawne.

I forget not how vnpleasant this later councell semeth to them, who haue with so much blod mainteyned their liberties: yet would I haue them estéeme that swéete, which gaineth their safety, ý either is by the two former means obteyned, or purchased by alteration of times, or surely established by nothing. Let vs in consideration of these contents, in like sort estéeme nothing, as those mighty Champions, & wise men, who blushed not to be vanquished therewith, either in matter of courage, or wit: for as nothing maistred them in their professions: so wrought it effectuall meanes for their preferment, honoring famous Captaines for fighting their countrey battles: enritching valiant Souldiers, who made their bodyes the Bulwarkes of the people: reuerencing ý lerned Iudge for doing of iudgement and iustice: and peaceablie chearishing the godly lerned, for redifieng the house of God. Furthermore, from this haue many attained to the highest dignities in common Weales, as Alpheus, who of a Taylor, was created Consull of Rome: as also Velocissimus the Horse of the Emperour Comodus had bén, if his maister had not bén preuented by death. Moreouer this is it, which being matched in ballance, with those things the world accounteth most excellent, mounteth toward Heauen, as to his naturall Center, the rest discending, as earthly, contemptible, and vile.

It semeth for the sequell of wonderfull price, when the professt and common enimie to man (who more then tyme deuoureth all things) vpon couenant for some seruice to an olde woman, to haue bit or nothing (as for the excellencie, impossible to be deliuered) had notwithstanding, his vnsatiable grédines satisfied, out of a bottomlesse pitcher, which (this good mother) had long for that paiment, behind

hir doꝛe.

To conclude, I thinke no leſſe perrill to be in handling tempoꝛall things, then in pulling vp the wonderfull rote Baaras: one oꝛder being pꝛeſcribde foꝛ our health in both: which conſiſteth in touching either, as matters which be vile and of great danger: and thereſoꝛe am perſwaded that this later age, cannot but acknowledge ſundꝛy benifites which riſe of nothing, as that which nurſeth the godly in the loue of vertue: and puniſheth the tranſgreſſoꝛs of good lawes: without the execution of which two, I doubt how the beam of iuſtice will ſtand vpꝛight, & giue gold weight, what viſoꝛ of well doing ſoeuer is put on to deceiue the woꝛld: which being not impꝛoperly painted, to be held in the hand of God, taketh not further hurte then is due foꝛ ſinne, and limited by his diuine pꝛouidence.

I feare I haue beene offenſiue to many, foꝛ tarying ſo long on nothing: who therfoꝛe ſhould not (if they duely regarde their particuler) remaine ſeuere cenſoꝛs of this matter: they hauing either feared, loued, oꝛ eſtæmed nothing, with greater partiallitie then I haue addicted my ſelfe to this laboꝛ.

The reſt which are delighted in the ſtudy hereof, I refer to the macheronicall phantaſtes of Merlinus Cocaius, and ſæpie Phantaſmata of Francois Rabilois, men greatly trauelled in this buſines: which being ſo wel handled of the both, I thought vnneceſſary to touch any further at this tyme: miſtruſting not, but many wil hereafter with their whole affections finiſhe the ſame: of which as the excellent ſubſtance of the heauens and earth were at the firſt created: ſo ſhall they within few reuolutions of yeares returne, as vnto their firſt matter: from ẏ time foꝛth ſhal iniquitye be vnhoꝛſed, that now ouerruneth the godly with many tiranies, and then ſhall the good people of God tryumph wyth the Lambe foꝛ euer.

FINIS.